

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAA-01 SES-02 SSM-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1446

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USICA WASHDC

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 2110

USDEL NO 37

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED)

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR ATHERTON'S REMARKS TO THE PRESS AFTER MEETING
PRIME MINISTER BEGIN

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF AMBASSADOR ATHERTON'S REMARKS
TO THE PRESS AFTER HIS 1 1/4 HOUR MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER
BEGIN TODAY IN THE KNESSET.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

ATHERTON: I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT I'M VERY APPRECIATIVE
INDEED TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR SO MUCH TIME THAT HE GAVE
ME TO REPORT TO HIM ON MY RECENT TALKS IN CAIRO, WHICH I DID
AT GREAT LENGTH. WE DISCUSSED A LITTLE BIT THE FORTHCOMING
VISIT OF SECRETARY VANCE AND THOSE WERE THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS
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OF THE MEETING TODAY. I DON'T REALLY THINK AT THIS STAGE,
WITH THE SECRETARY COMING SOON, THERE'S ANYTHING FURTHER
THAT I CAN ADD TO THAT.

QUESTION: WAS THERE ANY DISCUSSION OF LEBANON?

ATHERTON: YES, WE DID DISCUSS LEBANON BRIEFLY AT THE END.

QUESTION: WILL YOU HAVE ANY OTHER MEETINGS BEFORE SECRETARY VANCE COMES?

ATHERTON: THERE ARE NONE PRESENTLY SCHEDULED. I DON'T WANT TO SAY THAT THERE MAY NOT BE. IF IT WOULD SEEM USEFUL, OR IF THE FOREIGN MINISTER OR ANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES FEEL IT WOULD BE USEFUL, I'M ALWAYS AVAILABLE. BUT THERE ARE NO FURTHER MEETINGS SCHEDULED AT THIS POINT, BEFORE THE SECRETARY'S ARRIVAL.

QUESTION: MR. ATHERTON, GIVEN THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE, CAN WE NOW ASSUME THAT THERE WILL BE NO TALKS IN SINAI, AND THAT HE'LL BE IN ISRAEL AND EGYPT AND GO BACK TO WASHINGTON?

ATHERTON: THAT IS THE PRESENT EXPECTATION, YES. I THINK OUR PRESS SPOKESMAN MADE THAT PRETTY CLEAR IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS YESTERDAY IN WASHINGTON AND THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN THAT SITUATION.

QUESTION: DO YOU CONSIDER IT A FAILURE OF YOUR EFFORTS TO BRING AROUND THE NEXT DIRECT CONFERENCE?

ATHERTON: NO, I'M NOT GOING TO CHARACTERIZE THIS AT ALL WHILE WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE CONSULTATIONS THAT THE SECRETARY WILL HAVE WITH BOTH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND PRESIDENT SADAT, AS HE HAS ALREADY SAID, ABOUT WAYS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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WHICH IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO KEEP THE PEACE PROCESS GOING. I THINK WE SHOULD LEAVE IT AT THAT FOR NOW. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

BEGIN: AMBASSADOR ATHERTON WAS KIND ENOUGH TO INFORM US ABOUT THIS IN ALEXANDRIA WITH PRESIDENT SADAT AND FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL. ISRAEL HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR ATHERTON IS FOR THE TRIPARTITE MEETING AT UM HASHIBA FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL UNDER THE AMERICAN SPONSORSHIP. AND NOW WE SHOULD BE EXPECTING THE ARRIVAL OF SECRETARY VANCE ON SATURDAY NIGHT. WE SHALL START OUR TALKS WITH THE TWO DELEGATIONS ON SUNDAY AT 10:00 AM AND WE SHALL CONTINUE OUR TALKS IN THE AFTERNOON ON SUNDAY AND PERHAPS ALSO ON MONDAY MORNING UNTIL THE SECRETARY DEPARTS FOR EGYPT. AS MR. ATHERTON COULD HAVE TOLD US FOR THE TIME BEING, THERE IS NO POSITIVE REPLY FROM EGYPT ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVENING BOTH ISRAEL AND EGYPT UNDER THE AMERICAN SPONSORSHIP AT UM HASHIBA. BUT LET US HOPE THAT THEY WILL CHANGE THEIR MINDS AND SUCH A MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE. ISRAEL CONTINUES TO WISH TO HAVE SUCH A MEETING AT UM HASHIBA.
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